

# COVID-19 Related Changes Affecting MassHealth, Health Connector, and Health Safety Net

Last Updated: 3/29/2020

Change	Effective Date	Source
<b>MassHealth Eligibility</b>		
<b>Termination moratorium:</b> MassHealth members, as of March 18 or later, will not lose coverage or have a decrease in benefits for any reason other than moving out of state.	March 18- one month after federal emergency period ends	MassHealth: <a href="#">COVID-19 FAQ</a>  CMS: <a href="#">Fam. First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), CMS FAQ</a>
<b>Maintenance of Effort-</b> no restrictions in eligibility rules from those in effect Jan. 1, 2020	March –end of emergency	<a href="#">Fam. First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), CMS FAQ</a>
<b>MassHealth Enrollment Centers:</b> closed for walk-in visitors.	March 16- end of emergency	<a href="#">MassHealth Website Update</a>
<b>Hospital Presumptive Eligibility (HPE):</b> allow use of HPE for eligible individuals even if they have had MassHealth or HPE in the previous 12 months.	March- end of emergency	<a href="#">MassHealth All Provider Bulletins: 290 and 291</a>  <a href="#">Eligibility Operations Memo: 20-07</a>
<b>Self-Attestation if COVID-19:</b> People diagnosed with COVID-19 can now self-attest for all requests for information (with no post-eligibility proof other than citizenship and immigration where proof required after 90 day reasonable opportunity period)	TBD	<i>Not confirmed in writing</i>  3/20 phone call with MassHealth
<b>Premium Hardship if COVID-19:</b> People diagnosed with COVID-19 can waive past premium balances and current premiums by requesting a hardship based on their diagnosis.	TBD	<i>Not confirmed in writing</i>  3/20 phone call with MassHealth
<b>MassHealth Fair Hearings</b>		
<b>Lengthening current 30 day appeal period:</b> MassHealth members will have a longer period to request appeals. On 3-26, CMS approved an appeal period of 120 days. The longer appeal period and effective date have not yet been announced.	TBD	90 days: 3/20 phone call with MassHealth  120 days: <a href="#">3/26/20 CMS Approval of 1<sup>st</sup> 1135 waiver request</a>
<b>Exhausting Managed Care Internal Appeal prior to Fair Hearing:</b> CMS authorized state to effectively skip exhaustion requirement. MassHealth has not announced whether it will use this authority.	TBD	<a href="#">3/26/20 CMS Approval of 1<sup>st</sup> 1135 waiver request</a>

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<b>Timeliness of Fair Hearing Decisions</b> -CMS authorized waiver	TBD	<a href="#">3/26/20 CMS Approval of 1<sup>st</sup> 1135 waiver request</a>
<b>Telephonic Hearings:</b> All hearings telephonic	March- TBD	3/20 phone call with MassHealth
<b>MassHealth: Access to Benefits</b>		
<b>Waiver of Referral Requirement:</b> members enrolled in any type of managed care plan no longer needs a referral to receive any medically necessary covered service.	March- end of emergency	PCC and ACO: <a href="#">MassHealth All Provider Bulletins: 291</a>  Managed Care Plans: <a href="#">Managed Care Entity Bulletin: 22</a>
<b>Telehealth Flexibilities:</b> providers can deliver any MassHealth-covered service to MassHealth members via telehealth.	March 12- end of emergency	<a href="#">MassHealth All Provider Bulletins: 289</a>
<b>Children's Behavioral Health Initiative- Initial Assessments:</b> CBHI initial assessments can now be done by telephone.	March 12- end of emergency	<a href="#">MassHealth All Provider Bulletins: 289</a>
<b>90 Day RX Supply:</b> MassHealth members can get up to a 90-day supply of most prescription drugs.	March 14- end of emergency	<a href="#">MassHealth Pharmacy Facts: 141 and 142</a>  <a href="#">Managed Care Entity Bulletin: 22</a>
<b>Early RX Refills:</b> MassHealth members can get early refills of existing prescriptions so long as one refill remains on the prescription.	March 14- end of emergency	<a href="#">MassHealth Pharmacy Facts: 141 and 142</a>  <a href="#">Managed Care Entity Bulletin: 22</a>
<b>Expansion of Home Health Aide Services if PCA service disruption:</b> MassHealth member may use prior authorization for PCA services to receive home health aide services from Home Health Agency when experiencing a PCA services disruption due to COVID-19. MassHealth member may self-refer to home health agency for this purpose.	March - end of emergency	<a href="#">Home Health Agency Bulletin: 56</a>  PCM, FI & HHA have been trained about this

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<b>For expanded service, home health aide need only meet PCA criteria:</b> individual providing PCA-only home health aide services on behalf of a home health agency doesn't need to meet home health aide training and certification requirements established by federal regulation. They must only meet state's training requirements for PCA services and demonstrate competency in PCA they must furnish.	March - end of emergency	<a href="#">Home Health Agency Bulletin: 56</a>
<b>PCA Disruption: MassHealth OPTIONS program</b> will assist PCA users with unfilled hours who can use home health aide option. 844-422-6277	March- end of emergency	MassHealth communication to PCA Advisory Council on 3-24-20
<b>PCA consumers whose school or day programs have closed</b> will have their prior authorization for PCA hours automatically adjusted by Optum	March- end of emergency	<a href="#">MassHealth LTSS Provider Information</a> : Updates Related to Coronavirus Disease 2019
<b>PCA Overtime Limits:</b> MassHealth is suspending overtime limits for PCA program.	Duration of Emergency	<a href="#">MassHealth LTSS Provider Information</a> : Updates Related to Coronavirus Disease 2019
<b>Increased flexibility for LTSS providers:</b> extending existing authorization, allowing telehealth assessments, other changes that vary by type of service	Duration of emergency	<a href="#">MassHealth LTSS Provider Information</a> : Updates Related to Coronavirus Disease 2019
<b>COVID-19 Coverage:</b> All testing, treatment, and prevention of COVID-19 is covered by MassHealth. Managed care plans cannot impose any referral requirements for COVID-19 testing or treatment.	Duration of emergency	<a href="#">MassHealth Managed Care Entity (MCE) Bulletin</a> : 21
<b>Prior Authorization in Fee for Service:</b> CMS authorized temp. suspension; scope in MassHealth TBD	TBD	<a href="#">3/26/20 CMS Approval of 1<sup>st</sup> 1135 waiver request</a>

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<b>Extension of pre-existing authorizations</b> for which a beneficiary has previously received prior authorization through the end of the public health emergency: CMS authorized; scope in MassHealth TBD	TBD	<a href="#">3/26/20 CMS Approval of 1<sup>st</sup> 1135 waiver request</a>
<b>Waiver of public notice for state plan amendments</b> that expand access to services related to COVID-19	Duration of emergency	<a href="#">3/26/20 CMS Approval of 1<sup>st</sup> 1135 waiver request</a>
<b>New Website with COVID-19 Resources &amp; Information</b>		<a href="#">MassHealth COVID-19 Updates for Applicants &amp; Members</a>
<b>Health Connector</b>		
<b>Health Connector Limits Certain Adverse Actions:</b> Health Connector will not terminate or downgrade anyone for failure to respond to Request for Information	March 15- end of emergency	<a href="#">3-27-20 Assister Update</a>
<b>Health Connector Special Enrollment Period</b>	March 11-May 25	<a href="#">Health Connector Website</a>
<b>Health Connector Office Closure:</b> Health Connector Walk-in Centers are closed.	March 16- end of emergency	<a href="#">Health Connector Member Update</a>
<b>Informational Resources for Newly Unemployed:</b> Health Connector has resources in <a href="#">English</a> and <a href="#">Spanish</a> for those who lost health coverage through their job.		<a href="#">3-27-20 Assister Update</a>
<b>New Website with COVID-19 Resources &amp; Information</b>		<a href="#">Health Connector COVID-19 Updates</a>
<b>Health Safety Net</b>		
<b>HSN Presumptive Eligibility:</b> HSN will also accept presumptive determination, even if the patient has already received a presumptive determination in the past 12 months.	March 12 – end of emergency	<a href="#">EOHHS Administrative Bulletin: 20-09</a>
<b>HSN Moratorium:</b> As of March 18 or later, HSN patients will not lose coverage or have a decrease in benefits for any reason other than moving out of state.	March 18- one month after federal emergency period ends	Confirmed by MassHealth on 3-27
<b>HSN Eligibility:</b> Health Safety Net will be available for ConnectorCare	March 12- end of emergency	<a href="#">EOHHS Administrative Bulletin: 20-09</a>

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eligible (but unenrolled) patients beyond the 90-day eligibility period.		
<b>90 Day RX Supply:</b> HSN patients can get up to a 90-day supply of most prescription drugs.	March 14- end of emergency	<a href="#">EOHHS Administrative Bulletin: 20-09</a>
<b>Early RX Refills:</b> HSN patients can get early refills of existing prescriptions so long as one refill remains on the prescription.	March 14- end of emergency	<a href="#">EOHHS Administrative Bulletin: 20-09</a>
<b>Telehealth Flexibilities:</b> HSN will cover telehealth services.	March 12- end of emergency	<a href="#">EOHHS Administrative Bulletin: 20-09</a>
<b>HSN and Limited Coverage:</b> COVID-19 testing and treatment is covered by MassHealth Limited, and will be reimbursed by HSN if provided by hospital or CHC.	Ongoing	<a href="#">3/18 Assister Updates</a>
<b>HSN Deductible Waiver:</b> HSN patients do not need to make payments towards their annual deductible.	March 12- end of emergency	<a href="#">EOHHS Administrative Bulletin: 20-09</a>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>		
<b>New website to assess symptoms of for COVID-19:</b> Available to all MA residents, including the uninsured. Recommends next steps based on symptoms, including telehealth resources.	Duration of emergency	<a href="http://www.mass.gov/online-health-tool">www.mass.gov/online-health-tool</a>

For updates related to coronavirus state-wide and across all sectors:

- <https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>